

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RABAT 05393 061948Z

47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 031630

O 061921Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6921

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T RABAT 5393

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SS MO

SUBJECT: SAHARA: ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK

REF: RABAT 6907

1. WE BELIEVE THAT ANY PERCEPTION THAT KING HASSAN HAS DECIDED TO RISK EVERYTHING ON A DESPERATE LAST GAMBLE IS FALSE, THOUGH SITUATION IS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER. IN OUR VIEW KING IS PLAYING CAREFULLY CALCULATED GAME AND HOLDS SOME RESPECTABLE CARDS. HE APPEARS CONVINCED SPANISH MILITARY WILL NOT FIRE ON UNARMED CIVILIANS AND FOREIGN DELEGATIONS. THREAT POSED BY MINEFIELDS EXISTS, BUT PROBABLY IS MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL THAN PHYSICAL, GIVEN LARGE AREAS AND LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED, INTENSIVE FAR RECONNAISSANCE, AND POSSIBILITY OF SENDING HERDS OF ANIMALS AHEAD OF MARCHERS IN DUBIOUS AREAS. NEGOTIATED DEAL WITH SPAIN REMAINS KING'S GOAL; HE PROBABLY EXPECTS THAT SPANISH THREAT OF MASSACRING CIVILIANS WILL LOSE CREDIBILITY AS MARCH PROGRESSES, INCREASING PRESSURE ON SPAIN TO CONCLUDE SOMETHING LIKE THE BILATERAL DEAL WITH MOROCCO THAT WAS ALMOST WORKED OUT LAST WEEK. MEANWHILE WE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO ADVANCE HIS MARCHERS WITH DELIBERATE SPEED, MOVING OR PAUSING AS SEEMS BEST, TO AVOID PROVOKING SPANISH FORCES TOO FAR AND TO ALLOW TIME FOR FURTHER BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 RABAT 05393 061948Z

2. IF THE CREDIBILITY OF THE THREAT OF A SPANISH MILITARY RESPONSE APPEARS TO THE KING TO BE DIMINISHING, THEN THE OPPOSITE MUST HOLD TRUE REGARDING THE PROSPECT OF MILITARY ACTION BY ALGERIA. HERE AGAIN THE KING IS NOT WITHOUT CARDS. ALGERIA'S TOTAL MILITARY STRENGTH IS JUDGED GREATER THAN MOROCCO'S BUT HASSAN PROBABLY JUDGES THAT BOUMEDIENE WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO BE SEEN LAUNCHING A MAJOR WAR AGAINST AN ARAB NEIGHBOR, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE SUPPORT MOROCCO HAS OBTAINED FROM A NUMBER OF OTHER ARAB STATES. THIS WOULD NOT EXCLUDE FAIRLY BRISK LEVEL OF REGIONAL CONFLICT BUT OUR DATT REGARDS MOROCCAN FORCES IN BEING IN AREA ADJACENT TO SAHARA AS STRONG, RELATIVE TO WHAT ALGERIA NOW HAS IN TINDOUF AREA. (ADVANTAGE OF TERRAIN AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS COULD GIVE MOROCCANS CONSIDERABLE HOLDING POWER IN DEFENSIVE POSTURE.)

3. ONE PROBLEM FOR HASSAN WILL BE THAT ANY VISIBLE PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING HIS GOAL VIS-A-VIS SPAIN THROUGH THE TECHNIQUE OF THE MARCH WILL LIKELY INCREASE THE MILITARY THREAT FROM ALGERIA. MOROCCAN LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES ARE ALREADY STRAINED NEARLY TO LIMIT TO SUPPLY THE GREEN MARCHERS WITH NECESSITIES OF LIFE. TO THE EXTENT THAT MOROCCAN ARMED FORCES FARTHER TO THE EAST BECOME ENGAGED IN SERIOUS ARMED CLASHES, AT LEAST WITH F-POLISARIO UNITS AND PERHAPS WITH REGULAR ALGERIAN UNITS, A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES CURRENTLY USED TO SUSTAIN THE CIVILIAN MARCHERS WOULD HAVE TO BE DIVERTED TO SUPPORT MOROCCAN MILITARY EFFORT, WITH CONSEQUENT DEGRADATION OF MARCHERS' SUPPLY LINES. PROSPECT THAT MANY OF THESE MARCHERS MIGHT ACTUALLY BE LEFT SERIOUSLY SHORT OF FOOD OR WATER IN SAHARAN DESERT WOULD PRESUMABLY ACT AS POWERFUL PRESSURE ON HASSAN TO PULL BACK OR REDUCE SCOPE OF MARCH EVEN IF IT APPEARED TO BE ON WAY TO GRADUALLY ACHIEVING ITS POLITICAL OBJECTIVES VIS-A-VIS SPAIN.

4. HOW RISKY IS THE KING'S CURRENT COURSE, ON BALANCE? VERY, WE MUST CONCLUDE. HE MAY HAVE MISJUDGED THE SPANISH TEMPER (THOUGH HIS NOVEMBER 5 SPEECH SUGGESTS SOLICITUDE FOR SPANISH FEELINGS). IF SO THERE COULD BE A BLOODBATH OR AT LEAST A FIASCO AND KING STANDS TO LOSE ALL. WE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 RABAT 05393 061948Z

WOULD JUDGE THIS LESS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAN THE RISKS OF ONE FORM OR ANOTHER OF ALGERIAN INTERVENTION. IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEMS SUGGESTED ABOVE, THERE IS THE LESS TANGIBLE FACTOR OF MOROCCAN JUDGMENT, WHICH MAKES MISCALCULATION MORE LIKELY WITH ALGERIA THAN WITH SPAIN. NEITHER THE KING NOR THE BULK OF HIS PEOPLE WANT TO FIGHT SPAIN; THIS ENABLES HIM TO PURSUE HIS SPANISH STRATEGY RELATIVELY COOLLY AND DELIBERATELY, WITH THE EXPECTATION THE NATION WILL

FOLLOW HIS LEAD UNTIL AND UNLESS DISASTER OVERTAKES THEM
BY CONTRAST, MOROCCO'S MORE NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS ARE
SPOILING FOR A FIGHT WITH THE ALGERIANS, WHO ARE
UNIVERSALLY PERCEIVED HERE AS THE REAL ENEMY.
NEUMANN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975RABAT05393
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750386-0508
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751168/aaaaciol.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 RABAT 6907
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <31 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHARA: ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK
TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO, (HASSAN II)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006